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quaint, for, in this case, utility is in no way sacrificed to effect, a fault far too often committed nowadays.

The articles in Fig. 5 are founded on more ordinary motives, but they are, none the less, on fresh and sprightly lines, and characterized by features which cannot but appeal to cultivated tastes. The lady's writing table, with its mirror-backed tracery panel, and the pretty china cabinet, are as restrained as one could wish, and carried out in rich, dark mahogany; as they are, their effect is altogether charming. The music cabinet, stained green, with a curtain of Oriental silk, forms a variation from the square and somewhat boxy structure to which we have become accustomed, and is far from unpleasing.

A better study than is constituted by Fig. 6, to illustrate the growing tendency referred to, could not be found. The "Rembrandt" is the name given to this set, and sturdy simplicity is a leading characteristic of the whole. Fumed oak is the wood employed in the interpretation of this design, as being most in accordance with the spirit in which it has been devised. The chairs are covered in brown leather, and the cupboard door of the curious little sideboard has a panel of the same material, studded with large-headed bright nails, which is quite a fresh idea and helps to give consistency to the complete scheme.

Many more studies of a similar character might be illustrated, but those accompanying these cursory remarks will, I hope, serve to give some idea of the trend of English taste of to-day. With these examples in view one may surely contend that the conservatism which has sometimes been thrown in our teeth as a taunt is giving way to broader views, at all events so far as furniture is concerned, a contention which I shall endeavor to support further in future articles.

TASTE AND ECONOMY IN DECORATION AND FURNITURE.

BY E. KNIGHT.

THESE things are so much a matter of taste," is a very common remark; and so they are; but the result must show either good or bad taste; for good taste, like most other things, has its rules which cannot be ignored without the result suffering. Therefore, the first conclusion is: What is good taste?

As applied to the subject at present before us, good taste may be briefly described as the power of balancing, adjusting and arranging the various articles in a house, their colors and patterns, so as to produce a general harmony of the whole, as well as a certain fitness of things to their purpose and surroundings.

No remarks on good taste would be complete without an allusion to the opinion of its chief apostle, John Ruskin. In "Sesame and Lilies," he says that taste in architecture is the expression of national life and character, and also that it is a part and an index of morality; nay, more—good taste is the only morality. His words are, "Tell me what you like, and I will tell you what you are."

Thus, upon entering a room, it is by no means difficult to form a very fair estimate of the character of its owner from the surroundings.

The size and character of the house and the position and internal detail of the individual rooms very often suggest special treatment. It is, of course, impossible to convey more than an approximation of a color in words—the result is often made or marred by a slight difference in a tint, and the success or otherwise must depend upon the taste of the individual who superintends the work.

However proud we may justly be of the advances made by science and the mechanical arts in this century, we cannot but confess with regret that in many matters of taste we have fallen sadly behind the previous one.

It would appear by looking at the buildings erected in present times, that all good combinations of form have been previously exhausted. The only good results which we see are the successful reproductions of bygone styles; or where, if they have not been lavishly copied, some of their details and their general feeling have been reproduced. We should act upon this motto: "If we cannot leave the world the richer through our original designs, let us not leave it the worse, but rather take old forms of beauty for our models."

A person who possesses a fair amount of natural taste will soon perceive if the adviser is to be trusted; and if he is, will do well to be guided by his opinion, in preference to that of a number of friends, who will praise or condemn any single piece of paper or fabric upon the suitability of which they are consulted, without grasping the general effect of the room as a whole.

Nothing is more disheartening to a competent salesman than to be asked his advice and to have it ignored. To such a salesman's suggestions are often of great value, and an intelligent salesman will adopt them in preference to his own. It may be added, that a conceited man is invariably ill-informed, as his conceit limits his resources for increasing his stock of knowledge.

If the best results are to be obtained, a golden rule is to have every detail in each room settled before anything is put in hand or purchased. A hall, for instance, is generally seen from the principal rooms, and they from it. The colors in each should be so ordered that neither should disturb the general harmony.

It by no means follows that because we have everything in a room in good taste we must necessarily spend more money than we otherwise should do. Some of the very best effects are obtained by very simple means. But for this we must not be handicapped with incongruous pieces of furniture, or with carpets and curtains of violent colors, which, though of interest and value, would be out of harmony with their other surroundings.

The following remarks do not profess to be a complete treatise on the theory of color and form, but are merely hints and suggestions for the treatment of the principal rooms, the result of a very considerable and varied experience.

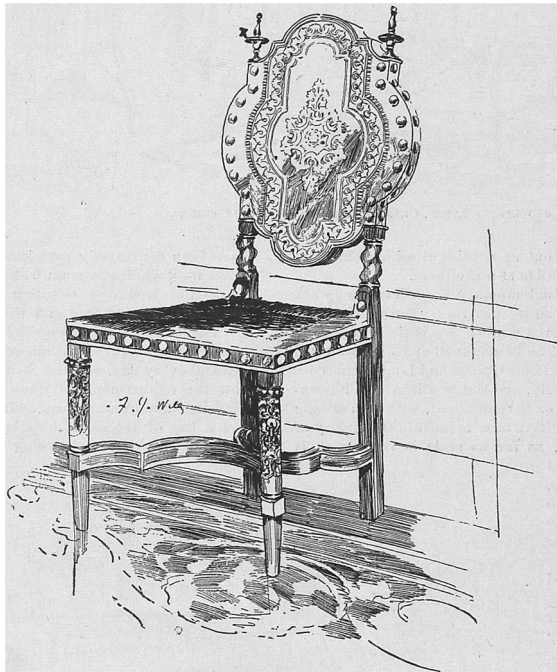
THE HALL.

The importance of this part of the house is again becoming recognized, and the hall is regaining the position it occupied prior to the early part of the present century.

It tends to be an index of the whole house; and it should, however small, have an air of comfort; and in city houses an air of warmth also. Articles should be there displayed to invite inspection and to convey generally an air of welcome. In large houses, especially those in the country, the hall makes one of the pleasantest lounges. There is an air of freedom in a comfortably furnished hall, which no other part of the house possesses.

Most halls, even the smallest—indeed, when they are little more than a passage—may be made to look cosy. A dark-stained floor, with a suitable Oriental rug; a well-covered wall paper, with the addition of a curtain at some convenient point; a small table and umbrella stand combined; a chair; a few prints on the walls; and a rail for hats and coats put around a corner, or in a cupboard out of sight if possible (for it is beyond the power of man to give any artistic effect to the ordinarily loaded hat-and-coat-stand), will be found a great advance upon the usual oil-cloth and cocoa-nut mat, and the cheerless looking varnished marble paper, which still obtain in many of the smaller houses.

Where space permits, the addition of a few pieces of furniture, such as a tall clock, an oak buffet, a china cabinet or bookcase, a few chairs, etc., should be introduced. In the larger halls, with galleries



SPANISH CHAIR IN EMBOSSED LEATHER. DESIGNED BY E. J. WILEY.

and passages opening out of them, where light is abundant, the whole should be drawn together by keeping all details of much one depth or tone of color, and the colors themselves limited in number. Soft reds or tapestry wall papers, with dark oak woodwork, or the same of a dull red to harmonize with the paper—oak or black handrail; and some relief may be obtained by having any plaster dressings round archways, doors and mouldings, or stringing courses, of a light cream color.

The ceiling should be light; if panelled with mouldings it is a great improvement.

When there are many doors, it would be effective if they were connected together by a high dado, either panelled wood or a dado-moulding only, and the wall forming the dado treated as the rest of the woodwork.

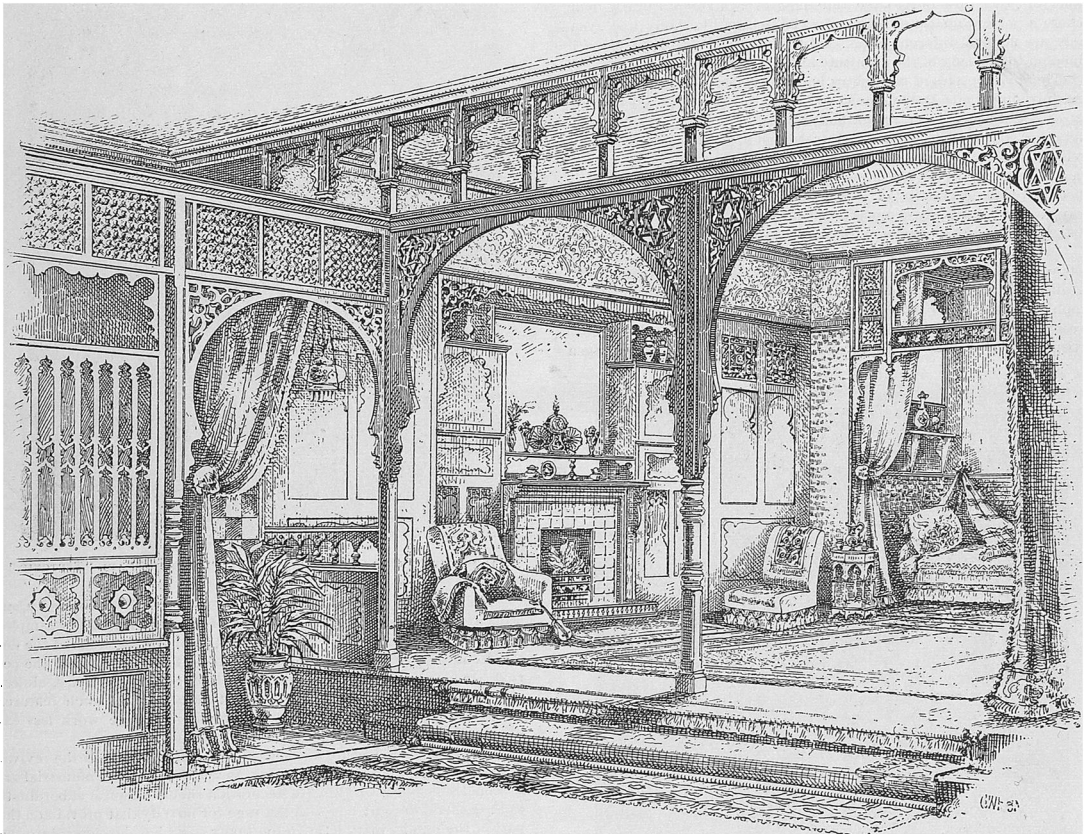
In dark halls a yellow paper would assist in giving light, and the woodwork and the cornice may be either dark oak or enamelled nearly

Too much attention cannot be paid to apparently trifling details—such as lighting up a dark corner with, for instance, a bust, a figure, or a light porcelain vase, or the judicious prominence being given to some particular piece of furniture, or the placing of a picture on an easel in front of some piece of drapery. In fact, let the decorator do his work ever so well, the general good effect may be lost, to a large extent, by want of taste and purpose in the disposal of the furniture by those who come after him.

(TO BE CONTINUED).

DECORATIVE NOTE.

IN selecting furnishings the greater number of us have to take for granted whatever we are told. The representative



"THE MOORISH STYLE IS ONE EMINENTLY ADAPTED FOR HALLS."

white. This, with an ebonized handrail and light cream-colored margins to stairs, is very effective.

The floor, where possible, should be either of polished oak or parquetry. Turkey carpet with the old colorings, or others of similar character, are the best. A seat with a rug-chest should not be omitted in the lobby to front entrance. Every large hall should have a cloak-room or a lavatory opening out of it. The Moorish style is one eminently adapted for halls, and our illustrations show a hall treated in this style, the architectural outlines of the style softening the hardness of the woodwork.

It is seldom but a curtain of some kind can be introduced; and it is always of the greatest assistance in softening the otherwise hard lines of the architectural details. Anything, in fact, that will soften outlines and give a few shadows may and should be introduced, such as palms, ferns, or even porcelain jars, with a few dried grasses or reeds. In a large hall a screen near the fireplace is almost a necessity.

of the establishment which we happen to patronize may by chance be a man of taste. But this is rare; for a man of taste is by no means the best salesman, and ability to sell is the chief qualification to consider from a business point. A salesman with taste will push best chiefly the goods which he can consciously recommend; and these, in the large majority of the show-rooms of the present day, would offer an exceedingly limited scope for his abilities. This state of things is hardly to be wondered at when we consider that the principal object of very many is to get the greatest display for the smallest possible outlay, irrespective of permanent beauty or of sound construction. Indeed, were the shops filled with the most choicely chosen stocks, they would not be appreciated by the majority of purchasers. For most of us, whether we possess taste or not, it would be much better to have what we fancy, rather than, as is frequently done, to take the advice of someone who *ought* to know more than we do, but who does not.